

Lack of media focus on literary programmes worrying

THERESAH ESSON / 10 FEBRUARY 2017



Professor Atukwei Okai (hand raised), Secretary General of Pan African Writers Association (PAWA), launching the GAW literary award at a ceremony in Accra. Those with him are Nana Kwesi Gyan- Apenteng, (2nd right), Dr Gheysika Agambila, (2nd left), Vice President of GAW and Nii Addokwei Moffat, Public Relations Advisor of GAW.

Picture: GABRIEL AHIABOR

The Chairman of the National Media Commission (NMC), Mr Kwesi Gyan-Appenteng, has expressed worry over the inability of the media to communicate literary programmes to the public.



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He said there were more than 400 media houses in the country but little attention had been paid to programmes on Ghanaian literature and books.

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“There are almost no literature sections in our media. Not a single one broadcasts plays or drama to carry our traditional culture, only a few of them carry weekly book programmes,” he observed.

Mr Gyan-Appenteng was speaking at the re-launch of the Ghana Association of Writers (GAW) Literary Awards in Accra yesterday.

Categories

The award which will be held in August 2017, will include categories for novel, short story, drama, poetry, children’s story and poetry, young writer, creative non-fiction, spoken word and scriptwriting.

All entries must be published works and be submitted by authors before March 31, 2017. Only one entry will be considered per category.

There will be a winner and two runners-up in each category and in addition, there will be a number of other recognition awards, including posthumous ones for writers of merit in the country.

Award

Mr Gyan-Appenteng lauded the earlier generation of GAW and underscored the need to ensure that the creativity and writing talents of young people were promoted and used to the benefit of society.

“Awards are sources of pride and prestige to winners and even those whose entries are only shortlisted, because they increase visibility and marketability for the writer and publisher of winning books,” he said.

According to the chairman, the award traced its last occurrence to the 1980s, stressing the need to re-birth the reading and writing enterprise to recognise excellence in the field of literature and literary arts.

Mr Gyan-Appenteng said the absence of a nationally recognised literary award scheme was one of the reasons books and literary works had virtually disappeared from the national development narrative.

Libraries

For his part, the General Secretary of Pan-African Writers Association (PAWA), Professor Atukwei Okai, urged the government to establish more libraries to make books available for reading.

He said reading and writing were the integral part of the development of every country, adding that a country that focuses on reading, progresses massively because development could only be built on education.

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